

CINCO DE MAYO PLANNER  
SAMPLE OP-ED  
569 words



**Amigos Don't Let Amigos Drive Drunk**  
**This Cinco de Mayo**  
*Remember to Designate a Sober Driver Before the 5<sup>th</sup> of May Celebration Begins*

Cinco de Mayo has become a big night out for many, particularly young adults. But it is also a very dangerous night out because of alcohol or drug impaired drivers. Those celebrating this year should be sure and designate their sober driver in advance – before the festivities begin.

That is why **[Local Organization]** is joining with other federal, state and local highway safety and law enforcement officials across the nation to remind all of those who plan on using alcohol during Cinco de Mayo festivities this year to act responsibly by designating their sober drivers before the celebrations begin.

Over the past 5 years since 1999, an average of 43 percent of all highway fatalities each year on May 5 and overnight into the early morning on May 6 were caused by impaired drivers with blood alcohol content (BAC) levels of 0.08 percent and above, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

Whether you are just meeting a few friends after work or attending a Cinco de Mayo party, if you plan on using alcohol, never drink and drive while impaired and never let your friends drive if you think they are impaired- and never let your friends drive if they show signs of impairment.

Designating a sober driver before the local celebration begins and making sure friends don't drive impaired are just two of several, simple steps to help avoid a tragic crash or an arrest for impaired driving when groups go out partying.

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If you are planning to use alcohol on Cinco de Mayo:

- Remember to designate your sober driver before going out to celebrate;
- Be sure and eat during the evening; load up on the chips and salsa and other appetizers, and then enjoy your other favorite Mexican foods during the evening;
- If drinking, don't even think about getting behind the wheel. Ask a sober friend for a ride home; call a cab, your local sober rides program, **(if your community has a local sober rides program, please insert the phone number here)** or a friend or family member to come and get you; use other mass transit if available; or just stay where you are and sleep it off until you are sober;
- Take the keys and never let a friend leave your sight if you think they are about to drive while impaired.

Impaired driving is one of America's deadliest problems. Nationally, more than 17,000 people died in alcohol-related highway crashes during 2003. Every 30 minutes, nearly 50 times a day, someone in America dies in an alcohol-related crash. Hundreds of thousands more are injured each year. According to NHTSA, about three in every ten Americans will be involved in an alcohol-related crash at some point in their lives.

Driving impaired or riding with someone who is impaired is simply not worth the risk because the consequences are serious and real. Not only do you risk killing yourself or someone else, but the trauma and financial costs of a crash or an arrest for driving while impaired can be really significant.

So please, enjoy Cinco de Mayo this year by designating your sober driver before the celebration begins. And remember on Cinco de Mayo, *Amigos Don't Let Amigos Drive Drunk.*

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